

FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: April 10, 2014

Agenda Item: Peregrine Falcon Take

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed for Presentation: 15 minutes

Background

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service delisted peregrine falcons in 1999 when there were less than 30 known occupied territories in Montana. Monitoring since that time shows continued increases in the number of nesting pairs and production of young, primarily in western Montana. The Montana Peregrine Institute reported 84 occupied nests in 2009 and 108 in 2012. The long term running average of fledged young per successful nest is 1.9. The take proposed here is based on 2012 productivity estimate of 203 young fledged and the agreed take of no more than 5 percent of annual productivity described in FWP's 2007 Final Environmental Assessment. From 2008 through 2011 a total of 42 falconers applied for 18 permits and five birds were taken. In the 2012-13 biennium, take operated under a 10-bird quota for resident falconers, with one permit for nonresident falconers. Seven birds were taken including the allowed nonresident take.

Public Involvement Process & Results

FWP received 86 comments in general support of the proposed take. One letter of opposition was received with concerns for the appearance that this sort of 'take' is commercialization of wildlife. There was virtually no comment on adding the Headwaters State Park nest to the list of sites closed to take. Representatives of the Montana Falconers Association support both the quota system for peregrine take and the nonresident permit allocation.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

Based on findings in FWP's 2007 Final Environmental Assessment and the history of peregrine take in Montana:

- authorize resident take of 10 nestling or fledged peregrines through a quota system during the 2014-15 biennium.
- authorize nonresident take of one nestling or fledged peregrine through a 2014-15 permit.
- restrict take to June 1-Aug. 31.
- limit take to one peregrine per year per falconer.
- impose a two-year waiting period for any falconer successful in taking a peregrine.
- allow only general or master falconers to take peregrines.
- prohibit take from eastern Montana to encourage expansion of the breeding population.
- prohibit take from certain nests of high value wildlife viewing opportunity and/or part of on-going agency approved research efforts, (add the nest at Headwaters State Park to the current list of seven closed-to-take nests).
- prohibit the sale, barter or exchange of birds from the wild.

Proposed Motion

I move the Commission approve FWP's recommendation to authorize the take of up to 10 peregrine falcons for falconry purposes by residents and one peregrine falcon for falconry purposes by nonresidents during the 2014-15 take period. I also move to add the nest at Headwaters State Park to the current list of nests closed to take.